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Review of Georg Steins, Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik

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GEORG STEINS, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlußphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik* (BBB 93; Weinheim: Beltz, 1995). Pp. 583. DM 118.

This substantial work is a redactional study of the growth of Chronicles by successive layers, each representing a new set of particular concerns and interests. The argument is presented in careful detail and depends on the application of very traditional historical-critical redactional arguments, sometimes even with differentiation of layers by specific Hebrew terms and phrases in the same sentence—always a problematic undertaking. Such fine-tuned textual analysis is getting rarer in a postmodernist age, but Steins is certainly a capable practitioner of the art.

The first hundred pages of S.'s text are a comprehensive review of previous scholarship on Chronicles, ranging over a variety of issues, including linguistic arguments, the relation to Ezra-Nehemiah, and various theories with regard to the growth of the work itself.

After an overview in which S. places his work in relation to previous scholarship, he begins his own analysis, based on the following selected texts: 2 Chronicles 29–32 (on Hezekiah), 2 Chronicles 34 (on Josiah), and 1 Chronicles 11–29 (on David). In brief sections he also touches on 2 Chronicles 1–9, with glances at 2 Chronicles 13, 20, and 26.

Steins seems particularly impressed with the work of Willi, who also suggested a series of redactional layers in Chronicles (as have other scholars), and S.'s work can be seen as an attempt to work out some of the detailed implications of Willi's (and to a certain extent, also Noth's) theories systematically. But there is an important difference in S.'s work. It is often argued that the earliest layers of tradition in Chronicles move from a concern about the house of David and the continued existence of Israel as a state (echoing most closely the Deuteronomistic sources) toward an interest in official worship and its various details, but S. argues not only that the later layers of addition are "mainly" about worship but also that the work as a whole is "thoroughly" interested in worship. S. disputes the suggestion that this is a significant change from the *Grundschrift* to the later additions. He argues that the *Grundschrift* was also deeply involved in issues of worship, and that the house of David was described primarily in relation to that question. Davidic kingship and the community are of decisive significance only in relation to their religious practices, which are mainly focused on the life of the temple. Indeed, David is seen as a "new Moses" (p. 418) because of his importance in the development of formal worship in all its varied details and assignments, and a strong connection is made between Moses' development of the "temple" in the wilderness and the Solomonic construction of the temple in Jerusalem.

A view of some of S.'s initial arguments about sections of the Hezekiah narrative illustrates his methodology. He begins his analysis of 2 Chronicles 29–32 with the following verses as his suggested *Grundschrift*: 29:1-4,5,6,8,10-11,16-18a,19. Later additions are the details about the doors of the vestibule, lamps, incense and burnt offerings, the tables with "show bread," and utensils, as well as detailed genealogies.

2 Chr 29:20-30 describes musical details in a manner corresponding to the interest in cultic details. S. believes that by carefully examining vocabulary and thematic details in successive layers he can differentiate between important "layers" of tradition, some of which themselves consist of various redactional elements.

The first of these proposed series of revisions was concerned with cultic personnel, particularly those groups placed in the category of "Levites," and S. often refers to this as a "Levitical layer" of redaction (e.g., 1 Chronicles 23-24; 26; 2 Chr 8:14-15; 35:2-3, 6, 8-10, 14b) dealing with musicians, duties, relationship between specific groups (Gershonites, Merarites, etc.), genealogical orientation, and even details regarding instruments. S. argues that some of the details about groups and musicians are fictionalizations based on the superscriptions of the psalms. There is also a notable tendency, argues S., to move toward a historicizing of the relation between the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem.

The second reworking of the material in Chronicles S. calls a "communal layer" (*Gemeinde-Schicht*), with קהל as the key term. Here, emphasis is on the community and on its leader's involvement in the maintenance and affirmation of public worship, rather than as the interest in the specific "minor clerics" under the levitical system evident on the earlier level. A comparison of 2 Chr 35:8-9, which S. assigns to the first reworking, with 2 Chr 30:23-27 with its emphases on "the whole community," which S. assigns to this second level, serves to illustrate his arguments.

The third and final reworking of the material, to which S. assigns a number of shorter passages (e.g., 1 Chr 28:17a) and even individual terms, also includes some longer passages such as 1 Chronicles 27. Here, S. argues that two main themes are present: the correction of details of worship, and an emphasis on the Northern Kingdom's participation in central worship.

Along the way S. reviews a variety of related themes in research on Chronicles, including his idea that in the Chronicler's *Grundschrift* a basic form of Ezra-Nehemiah was used as a source of composition and influence.

Steins's work is a substantial analysis of Chronicles in detail, and it will certainly be an important work for scholars to consider. My only criticism is that in his virtually exclusive attention to literary and linguistic methods of study he has neglected wider socioeconomic issues that may relate to the tendencies within the various layers of redaction that he has identified. Only briefly (two pages) does S. give serious consideration to such social approaches to the text. Literary products do not grow in a vacuum. Greater attention to social and historical surveys (see, e.g., Jon Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995], perhaps unavailable to S.) would have strengthened S.'s work by encouraging him to relate it to important social and political developments in the Persian period.

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